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International Court of Justice

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OFFICE OF CHIEF OF COUNSEL FOR WAR CRIMES

EVIDENCE DIVISION

Date : 9 August 1948

I certify that Document Number 3308-PS was introduced into evidence as Exhibit Number GB-288 in the Trial by the International Military Tribunal of Hermann GOERING, et al, which commenced on 20 November 1945, and that the attached photostat is a true and correct copy of the original.

Fred Niebergall

Fred NIEBERGALL
Chief, Document
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C E R T I F I C A T E

I hereby certify that the annexed document 3308-PS No. GB-288 is a photostat of an original document submitted in evidence by the British Prosecution under this number. The original document has been withdrawn in accordance with Rule 10 of the International Military Tribunal, and to the best of my knowledge and belief is to be held at the National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Paul Joosten

PAUL A. JOOSTEN

General Secretary
International Military Tribunal

Nuremberg, 9 August 1948

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AFFIDAVIT

Statement of
Gesandter Paul Otto Gustav Schmidt

I, PAUL OTTO GUSTAV SCHMIDT, being first duly sworn on oath, state:

1. I was an interpreter in the German Foreign Office from 1923-1945. Prior to 1939, my duties consisted of interpreting and keeping the minutes of discussions at diplomatic conferences. Beginning in 1924 my primary assignments at diplomatic discussions included the following:

1924	Conference of Stressemann and Herriot at London concerning Dawes Plan.
1924-1927	German-French trade negotiations in Paris.
1925	Lorcarno meetings.
1926	Meeting of League of Nations Assembly, Council and economic committees.
1927	World Economic Conference at Geneva.
1929	Hague Conference for final approval of Young Plan.
1930	Paris trade negotiations in reference to Saar, and other economic conferences.
1930ff	International cartel meetings.
1931	Laval visit to Berlin.
	Six Power Conference in London on economic matters.
	Visit of Bruening and Curtis to London.
1932	Geneva Disarmament Conference.
1933	League of Nations Assembly; other conferences in London.
1933-1935	Meetings of German and French trade delegations.
1935	Visit of Eden and Simon to Berlin.

I was first called to interpret for Hitler in connection with the 1935 visit of Simon and Eden to Berlin. In fact, I served at virtually every meeting at which Hitler and Ribbentrop participated, and was with Goering when important visitors called and when he represented Germany in diplomatic conferences abroad. In recognition P.O.S. of these services, I was made ~~Chancellor~~ Councillor of Legation in 1935, Minister II Class after Munich, and Minister I Class after Compiegne. Since 1939, I have been Director of BRAM (Buero des Reichsaussen-ministers), and in 1944 I was made Chief of the POW and Civilian Internee Section.

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2. Whatever success and position I have enjoyed in the Foreign Office I owe to the fact that I made it my business at all times to possess thorough familiarity with the subject matter under discussion, and I endeavoured to achieve intimate knowledge of the mentality of Hitler and the other leaders. Throughout the Hitler regime, I constantly endeavored to keep myself apprised as to what was going on in the Foreign Office and in related organizations, and I enjoyed such a position that it was possible to have ready access to key officials and to key personnel in their offices.

3. The general objectives of the Nazi leadership were apparent from the start, -- namely, the domination of the European continent, to be achieved, first, by the incorporation of all German-speaking groups in the Reich, and secondly, by territorial expansion under the slogan of "Lebensraum". The execution of these basic objectives, however, seemed to be characterized by improvisation. Each succeeding step apparently was carried out as each new situation arose, but all consistent with the ultimate objectives mentioned above.

4. The attempted putsch in Austria and the murder of Dollfuss on 25 July 1934 seriously disturbed the career personnel of the Foreign Office because these events discredited Germany in the eyes of the world. It was common knowledge that the putsch had been engineered by the Party, and the fact that the attempted putsch followed so closely on the heels of the blood purge within Germany could not help but suggest the similarity of Nazi methods both in foreign and in domestic policy. This concern over the repercussions of the attempted putsch was soon heightened by a recognition of the fact that these episodes were of influence in leading to the Franco-Soviet Consultative Pact of 5 December 1934, a defensive arrangement which was not heeded as a warning by the Nazis.

5. The announcement in March of the establishment of a German

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Air Force and of the introduction of conscription was followed on 2 May 1935 by the conclusion of a mutual assistance pact between France and the Soviet Union. The career personnel of the Foreign Office regarded this as a further very serious warning as to the potential consequences of German foreign policy, but the Nazi leaders only stiffened their attitude toward the Western Powers, declaring that they were not going to be intimidated. At this time, the career officials at least expressed their reservations to the Foreign Minister, Neurath. I do not know whether or not Neurath in turn related these expressions of concern to Hitler.

6. The reentry of the German military forces into the Rhineland was preceded by Nazi diplomatic preparation in February. A German communique of 21 Feb 1936 reaffirmed that the French-Soviet Pact of mutual assistance was imcompatible with the Locarno Treaties and the Covenant of the League. On the same day Hitler argued in an interview that no real grounds existed for conflict between Germany and France. Considered against the background statements in MEIN KAMPF offensive to France, the circumstances were such to suggest that the stage was being set for justifying some future act. I do not know how far in advance the march into the Rhineland was decided upon. I personally knew about it, and discussed it, approximately 2 or 3 weeks before it occurred. Considerable fear had been expressed, particularly in military circles, concerning the risk of this undertaking. Similar fears were felt by many in the Foreign Office. It was common knowledge in the Foreign Office, however, that Neurath was the only person in government circles consulted by Hitler who felt confident that the Rhineland could be remilitarized without armed opposition from Britain and France. Neurath's position throughout this period was one which would induce Hitler to have more faith in Neurath than in the general run of "old school" diplomats, whom he (Hitler) tended to hold in disrespect.

7. Although Italy did not consult Germany prior to commencement

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of its war against Ethiopia, the Nazi policy makers were pleased with this technique for handling international affairs. They saw also the possibility in this war to draw Italy away from Britain and France toward Germany, as well as the possibility of its undermining the collective security system of the League of Nations. The career officials in the Foreign Office were very much concerned with the possibility of strong sanctions being applied, particularly if the war should be seized as an opportunity to apply pressure on the Fascist dictators. In this conflict, Germany gave assurances that it would assist Italy economically to the utmost. This was done in the beginning of the discussions regarding sanctions. I am unfamiliar with the details of the assistance granted, but it is probable that these matters were settled through the German commercial attache in Rome or by means of trade delegations.

P.O.S.

8. Plans for annexation of Austria were a part of the Nazi program from the beginning. Italian opposition after the murder of Dollfuss temporarily forced a more careful approach to this problem, but the application of sanctions against Italy by the League, plus the rapid increase of German military strength, made safer the resumption of the Austrian program. When Göring visited Rome early in 1937, he declared that union of Austria and Germany was inevitable and could be expected sooner or later. Mussolini, hearing these words in German, remained silent, and protested only mildly when I translated them into French. The consummation of the Anschluss was essentially a party matter, in which von Papen's role was to preserve smooth diplomatic relations on the surface while the Party used more devious ways of preparing conditions for the expected move. The speech delivered by Papen on 18 Feb 38, following the Berchtesgaden meeting, interpreted the Berchtesgaden agreement as the first step toward the establishment of a Central European commonwealth under the leadership of Germany. This was generally recognized in the foreign office as a clear prophecy of a Greater Germany which would embrace Austria.

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9. The facts stated above are true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief. This declaration is made by me voluntarily and without compulsion. After reading over this statement I have signed and executed the same at OBERURSEL/Germany this 21 day of November 1945.

(Signed) Paul Otto Gustav Schmidt
PAUL OTTO GUSTAV SCHMIDT

Subscribed and sworn to before me at OBERURSEL/Germany this 21 day of November 1945.

(Signed) Rolf Wartenberg
ROLF WARTENBERG
1st Lt, INF

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